

August 19, 2014, BLT Agenda Item Comments

Comments on the Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees (BLT) agenda items, submitted by:
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Item 4. Approval of Minutes (July 21, 2014, Meeting)

Changes to the passages shown in *italics* are suggested in ~~strikeout~~ underline format.

Page 1, Item 2: "Roll call by ~~Admin~~ Administrative Support Specialist Elaine McMillion."

Page 2, Item 4.B.2, paragraph 1: "Selections were made ~~to have as follows~~: Vice Chair Prichard to replace Chair Grant ... and Secretary Palk to remain as liaison on the DSLS (Distinguished Speaker Lecture Series) Committee."

Page 3, paragraph 1: "Support Services Coordinator Melissa Kelly began by explaining that ~~the~~ Newport/Mesa Pro Literacy is the Board that works with the NBPL Literacy Program."

Page 5, Item "5," sentence 7: "Trustee King offered to talk with the Corona del Mar Resident's Association which is comprised of over thirty ~~residence~~ residents groups to see what the ~~demographics of the~~ community values in a library."

Page 5, Item 7, last sentence: "... so that the public would be able to review it prior to the meeting and ~~be~~ prepared to make comment if they wished."

Item 5.A.1. Customer Comments

Comment 6 (OC Register and Daily Pilot from 2002 or 2003): Staff should perhaps be aware that in addition to the resources cited, on their freely accessible website, the *Daily Pilot* has (under News...Archive search...) a searchable database of all their on-line content back to 1999. It might be noted that the *Daily Pilot*, and its predecessors have, for many years, been the City government's "official" newspaper used for publishing legal notices (which, like other paid advertising are *not* preserved in the on-line archive), and that for the recent years for which microfilm images of the printed pages are not available, the reference desk has access to disks with digital images of the pages as published.

Item 5.A.2. Library Activities

Under "Teen Services," is the change in staff liaison to the Young Adult Advisory Council expected to bring more or less interaction between YAAC and the BLT?

Item 5.A.3. Expenditure Status Report

Is the Board going to see a final and complete accounting of how the Library ended the fiscal year that closed on June 30? Or has it already done so?

Item 5.A.4. Board of Library Trustees Monitoring List

Starting with the October meeting, the list is obviously lacking in planned dates for most items.

Item 5.B.1. Information Technology Update

It is impossible to comment on this since no details have been provided in advance of the meeting.

Item 5.B.2. Okazaki Gift

This gift was unanimously accepted, but without public comment, by the City Arts Commission at its August 14, 2014, meeting.

It would have been good if someone from the Sister Cities Association had been there to explain the details of why the gift was being offered, what the time frame would be if accepted, what the donor's wishes were, who the artist is, how durable the materials would be and so on. Unfortunately, they were not, and none of this information was offered or questioned.

As I said to the Arts Commission *after* they had made their decision, although I appreciate from the staff report that Tokugawa Ieyasu was a native of our sister city, Okazaki, and while the proposed statue may create some historical interest in things Japanese, I have to question whether commemorating a ruthless military/political strongman is in keeping either with American values or with the intended tranquility of the proposed site. I should also have questioned the durability of the materials, for I have more recently noticed that the carved features on the unknown artist's granite "Friendship Statue" given by Okazaki for the Mariners Branch are almost illegible after just 10 years.

Now that the donation is before the Library Trustees for placement in the "Bamboo Courtyard," I have a further concern about the impression being created that the sister city, or the Sister Cities Association, are effectively being allowed to claim "ownership" of library property and dictate how that space should be used. I don't think acceptance of this particular gift, and particularly acceptance of it for a location dictated by the donor, should be taken as a foregone conclusion. Had the Association asked in advance, there are many gifts more in harmony with the setting that might have been suggested.

Item 5.B.3. Corona del Mar Branch Project Update

I am pleased to see this item on the agenda for public discussion. I have a slight problem with, according to the July 21 minutes, there having been two Trustees designated to serve as liaisons to the staff working group, and a third designated as an alternate. This creates a great temptation for those three Trustees, who constitute a majority of the Board, to talk about the renovation plans outside of the Board's noticed public meetings, in violation of the Brown Act.